

OAK GROVE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Oak Grove Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in the early 1.800's. The first church called The Chapel was located only slightly south of the present building. White and black people worshipped in the first church. The whites met in the morning and the blacks in the afternoon.

In 1895, the present building was erected on land donated by Mr. John Underwood and Mr. Nelson Underwood. Some timbers from the original building are in this present structure. Mr. Alex Smith and Mr. Enoch Huffaker were the carpenters. They also made the pews. Mr. Huffaker carved and built the pulpit and Altar.

Classrooms were added to the west end in 1950. Dewell Thomas was the builder with some volunteer help. The women were responsible for raising the money to get it started. In 1958, a kitchen, restrooms; and some dining space, along with three classrooms were added. This time the ladies quilted to get funds for the beginning. The quilts were done for \$10.00 each except for those Mrs. Docia Heckler sold in New York for \$30.00. Mr. Everett Underwood was hired to do this work. About 1968 the Vestibule was added. Also near this date, Mr. Howard Hickman brought his equipment and we added black top to our parking area. Another building program began in late 1979. An enlarged kitchen, dining area, two large classrooms and another bath were finished in 1981.

During 1983-84, the Sanctuary has been painted, as well as the exterior. Most important was the rebuilding of the Church Steeple, which has been capped with a steel cross made by Phillip Johnson and Kent Thomas.

Through the years, additional land was donated by Mrs. Ora Underwood Robertson. She along with Sam Hodges gave land for the expansion of the cemetery, too. Through the year's people such as John Thomas, Stanley Cates, Osee Huffaker, Kent Thomas, Doyle Byrd, and Bessie Underwood have served as Trustees or volunteers for the care of the cemetery.

The Oak Grove Church was first on the Thorngrove Circuit with six other churches. Then we were, changed to a five point French Broad Circuit. Later the circuit had only four churches. The pastor came only once each month until 1952 when we began having services on two Sundays each month.

In 1963, we joined with Henry's Crossroads to form the Kodak Circuit. Rev. Ed Farmer was the pastor on this new circuit. Worship services were, conducted every Sunday beginning with this change.

Music played an important role in the early church just as it does today. Those early members were, blessed by having Singing Schools conducted by Mr. D. A. Henry

and Mr. Dell Henry. These schools were, taught throughout many communities. The Henry brothers not only taught singing but both led the singing with their beautiful voices. Both Del and Aut were composers of published hymns.

Especially in the early days, the Superintendent of Sunday School was very important. Serving in this position were R. C. Huffaker, E. U. Huffaker, John Underwood, H. G. Underwood, Walter Hodges, Warren Johnson and Hal Huffaker. These men were followed by Mack Huffaker and Bill Catlett. During this period, attendance in Sunday School ranged between 90 and 115. Some perfect attendance records include Howard Hickman with 13 years and Darrell Huffaker with 7 years. The next years had E. R. Underwood Kent Thomas and Sam Hodges as Superintendents.

Some organists in those early days include Carrie Smith Thomas, Lucille Hodges King, Hattie Hickman Brooks, and Berkley McCall. Murrell Henry Smith often played for her father, Mr. A. D. Henry, and still "fills in" today. John Thomas directed the singing, especially in the evening.

Mr. Denzil Henry played for awhile, followed by one of his pupils, Carrie Lou Huffaker. The first piano was purchased after the tornado of 1935 had damaged the church roof, leaking on the pump organ. A play by the young people, directed by Mrs. Annice Thomas, raised the money to pay for the piano. Today it remains in the classroom where the ladies meet. Marie Johnson Temple was the talented pianist until her marriage. Today we are still blessed with Vivian Thomas and Jean Underwood giving of their time and talents in music. The present piano and organ were purchased in the 1960's.

Ministers who grew up in the Oak Grove Church were Ollie Underwood, Joe Underwood, and Mark Moore. Also, a Baptist Minister, Richard Emmert was in this church until high school graduation. He accepted the Lord as his Savior in Mrs. Dewell Thomas' class.

Those unpaid servants who concerned themselves with the care of the building include Dewell Thomas, Stanley Cates, Everett Underwood, Frances Bates, and Roy Johnson. They set an example that is being continued by younger men such as Kent Thomas, Alan Roach, Phillip Johnson, Dan Smith, Bob Humphries, Glen Burchby, Newman Gibson, Kenny Housewright, and others.

Strong lay leadership in the early days kept the Oak Grove Church functioning just as it still does. Sunday School teachers remembered for their caring include Mr. Harve Underwood, Minnie Moore Underwood, Sam Underwood, Mark Moore, Mr. A. D. Henry, Osee Huffaker, Elizabeth Moffett, Ollie Underwood, T. I. Mount, and Bill Underwood who always was present for midweek prayer service.

Since 1966, Esta Lee Housewright has served as Secretary for the Charge Conference. In Sunday School and Church, we have had only three secretaries for over thirty years. These include Mrs. Warren Johnson, Mrs. Hal Huffaker, and Mrs. Roy

Johnson. The same is true for the Membership secretaries; these have been Mrs. Osee Huffaker, Mary Ella Hickman, and Mrs. Annice Thomas.

A very active women's organization began in 1941 under the leadership of Mrs. W. H. Leming, the Pastor's wife. That first group, known as Women's Society of Christian Service, had as President, Mrs. Dewell Thomas; the Treasurer was Mrs. W. P. Henry. Twenty-five years later, we honored Mrs. Henry, known to us as Mince, for serving as Treasurer those twenty-five years. Presidents since then include Mrs. Leona Cox, Clara Johnson, Karen Housewright Tipton, Helen Creager, Vivian Thomas, Fstella Hickman, Emma Ruth Catlett, and Beverly Smith.

Tradition continues with the annual Egg Hut on Easter afternoon as well as the Vacation Church School, which began its important role in the 1940's and continues annually.

The first MYF was organized in the mid-fifties. As their group became adults, there was not an active group until 1961 when another group of youth was organized with Kent and Vivian Thomas as counselors. This large group was involved in many programs and activities.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Underwood served as counselors until the group joined with Henry's Crossroads for a circuit MYF in 1963.

The earliest pastor recalled was Rev. Clendenen. Others who followed him were G. O. Cox, W. L. Pickering, F. T. Branson, G. L. Shoop, John Myers, Will Bull, G. F. Bales, Fred Lawson, Mr. Lucas, Mr. Sadler, I. L. Cox, Mr. Brannarn, W. H. Lemming, Mr. Buchanan, Troy Singleton, G. F. Cox, Lee Hill, James Walter, Mr. Brady, Robert Powers, Ed Farmer, Gerald Brown, Charles Fisher, W. T. Carey, Howard Pasel, Don Ferguson, Robert Gillespie, Larry Carroll, Stewart Oaks, and our present pastor Fred Dearing.

Highlights recalled by the older ladies as they were gathered around the quilt include incidents such as: People either walked to church or used horses. In summer, the horses were kept near the well because of the deep shade. Horseshoes were nailed to the trees in order for the reins to be fastened in them. A stile was in front of the Church to use for mounting the horses. Families often came in the wagon, stopping along the road to pick up neighbors. During Revivals, there would be many wagons and this sanctuary would have standing-room only.

During a Revival, a young pastor was in a quandary when no one was present to play the organ. Mr. Dell Henry came by from a survey job; the Pastor quickly invited him to play. He turned to expose a tear in his shirt, and said, "Oh Child, I can't get up front with this shirt," but he did.

Mud was knee-deep in the road, which was cut through the Church property. The Minister stayed overnight with Church members because of the distance between

churches. Often the business was conducted on Saturday while the Pastor was in the community.

With only this sanctuary Sunday School classes were held in each corner. The “card class” met behind the organ or piano. At first, a large stove sat in the center but later two stoves were installed to better warm the larger group. Offering at Sunday

School was often all pennies. In order to raise money for one project, the women donated a big hen. When Claude Hodges’ hen couldn’t be caught, Osee, her sister, just lifted one from the nest. The person who bought her hen got a bonus—an egg a day! Men sat on one side of the aisle; the ladies on the other side, this being a rule set down by Francis Asbury.

After crops were “laid by” in the fall the church would have a Revival, Usually for two weeks, sometimes three or four, with services in the morning and evening. The children attending the Oak Grove School would be lined up and marched into the Church daily for these Revivals. Returning to the school for lunch the children felt as if they had had a lengthy recess. Many came to the Altar at these services. No problem with separation of Church and School! The men who still had field work would stop long enough to attend the morning services, took Again the visiting minister, as well as the Pastor, would stay in the homes of the members. Many chickens and country hams were consumed during those weeks

As we review the heritage our forefathers left for us, we must be diligent in our efforts to uphold Jesus Christ as head of the United Methodist Church here at Oak Grove. May we make every effort to record and retain information for the next two hundred years of Methodism.

Sunday-morn June 17, 1888
 School met pursuant to adjournment
 Opening service, singing on page 14
 in Silver Bymal & Morning
 Lesson, 2nd chapter of Acts
 Prayer by the Supt.
 Report of the previous meeting
 adopted. Classes took their
 respective places and were
 examined. Subject Lesson
 The Great Commission,
 Golden Text. The
 Lord gave the word: great
 was the company of those
 that published it.
 New members 3 absentees 13.
 No Present 27
 contributions 11 \$.
 after singing the school adjourned
 on the following Sunday
 Effie Supt. &
 A. A. White Secy.

Out Door

Sunday-morn June 24, 1888
 School met pursuant to adjournment
 Opening service by singing in
 Silver Bymal & Morning Lesson
 & chapter of Psalms and prayer
 by the Supt. Report of the previous
 meeting adopted. Classes then
 took their respective places and
 were examined on the review
 lesson. Absentees 9 No Present

July 1st 1888
 School met pursuant
 Opening service
 hymnal and a
 lesson were
 was given by
 The Supt. then
 account of an
 special meeting
 adopted. So
 respective in
 was given. &
 God's covers
 Golden Text
 a God, an
 to me a p
 present 3
 B. 15- 16
 10 Ch. car the
 school cho

Rev. J. H. ...
 the ...
 the first ...
 was ...
 The ...
 singing ...
 ...
 ...
 part of the
 of ...

Out Grow

Sunday morning August 13th 1891
School met pursuant to adjournment
fearing services by the respective
messrs and from by the Sept the
part of the Sept was read and
approved then the classes
out there places and was
commenced till of lesson Christ's
authority to be present 29 absent
29 toll no involved 29 contribution
5 etc the classes being through
school adjourned for a short
time after which there was
breaching by persons and
after preaching the Sabatis school
was organized into a missionary
school O L U president
J C U vice president A. Smith
secret M. Smith treasure
A. Smith organizing committee O L U
S. P. Underwood Solo. Underwood
services was closed till the
following sabbath

9 services by reading
services by reading
and from by O. L. U. toll no present 29
29 toll no present
involved 29

O. V. H. Sept
A. Smith's act

Out Grow

Sunday morning
school met pursuant
opening services
lessons and from
report of the Sept
the classes then
was adjourned till
five thousand of
present 29 toll no
29 toll no
the classes being
closed Sunday
school adjourned
Sabbath

9 services by reading
and from by O. L. U. toll no present 29
29 toll no present
involved 29

Oak Grove Church Record

Month	Year	Name	Event	Date
		Probationers		
		By J. S. Cardwell		
Aug	1894	Martha Parkes	Boiler	
"	"	Viola Mount	Edt	
"	"	Sarah Randles	Rec'd	April 25, 97
Aug	96	Emaline Kirby	Received	Feb 28, 97
By	"	Sallie Keener	Rec'd	Nov 28, 97
"	"	Cordelia Underwood	Rec'd	"
Kimberly	"	Leitha Carment	Rec'd	Feb 28, 97
"	"	Thomas Underwood	deceased	
"	"	J. U. Song	gone	2.
"	"	Callie Song		
"	"	Arthur Huffaker	Rec'd	
"	"	Eliza Huffaker	Dec	
"	"	Netta Camel	gone	
"	"	Birtha Johnson	deceased	
"	"	Elmer Bryan	Rec'd	Feb 28
"	"	R. S. Hancock	Rec'd	
"	"	Malinda Hancock		
"	"	Eddie Huffaker	Rec'd	April 23, 97
"	"	J. Keiter Huffaker	Dec	
Nov	28, 97	Nora Smith	Rec'd	98
Aug	25, 98	Allie Underwood	"	July 31, 98
"	"	Etta Lane	"	"
"	"	Blanch Johnson	"	"
"	"	Vesta Ball	"	"

Norwood Pin Charge
Probationers Sept 15, 1900

Jra N. Hickman	Recd.	Sept 15, 1900
Thos. S. Griffin		
Samuel Kirby		
Caldona Smith	Recd.	Sept. 15 1901
Ene Underwood	"	" " " "
Nora Hickman	"	" " " "
Elvora Koontz	Deceased	
Anna Huffaker Bailey		
Garrie Spitt	Recd	Sept 15 1901
Welmur Underwood	"	" " " "
Will Mount		
Frank Underwood		
Frank Styles		" " " " 1901
Alice Carmichael		" " " " "
Alice Underwood		" " " " "
Sept 25 E. L. Lane-Hewey		
Blanch Johnson	Underwood	
W. E. Bales	received	
11/3/04 W. E. Bryan	received	
Sam Huffaker	Recd in full	
Annie Huffaker	" in full	
9/8/05 James Griffie	received	
Sillie Hill	received	

No. 132. The Way Grows Brighter.

A. D. HENRY.

1. If some-times the path-way seems do-ubt-ful and drear, Or I have
 2. In du-ty there's plea-sure no tongue can ex-press, My doubt and
 3. God gives me no task that I can-not per-form, And He for
 4. The Sav-iour has prom-ised to nev-er for-sake, Or leave his
 5. Thro' Christ I'll be faith-ful and on Him be-hove, Till life and

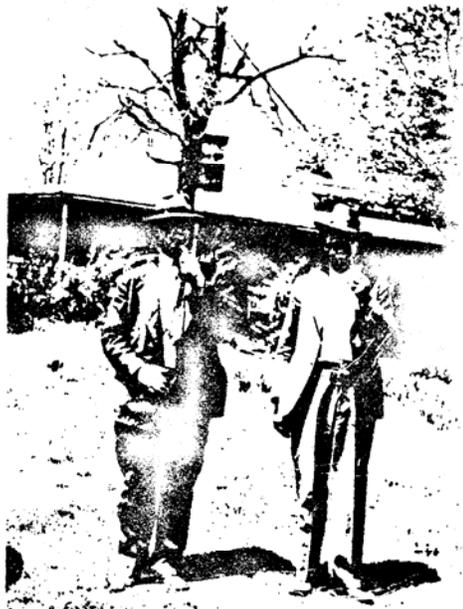
failed my whole du-ty to do, I'll say, by the help of my
 fears are all driv-en a-way; Re-joic-ing in love, his great
 tri-als my soul will pre-pare; He'll ev-er up-hold me in
 chil-dren a-lone in dis-tress; I know He will keep till in
 la-bors for-ev-er are o'er, And then go up you-der a

CHORUS.

Sav-iour so dear: "I will be faith-ful and true."
 name I con-fess--The way grows bright-er each day.
 calm or in storm, And help my bur-dens to bear. The way grows bright-er, my
 heav-en I wake, And o'er my spir-it will bless.
 crown to re-ceive, And e'er will Him I a-dore.

bur-dens light-er, The more I toil for my Lord (my lo
 fly-ing, I'll keep on try-ing, And great will be my r

Property of A. D. Henry, Kodak, Tenn. 1912.



No 135. O What Joy Awaits Us All!

P. A. Henry.

F. A. H.

1. We all have tri-als here be-low, Temptations to o'er-come
 2. What-e'er our lot, in all we do, O Lord make us a rig-ht
 3. When death shall come, O! sin-ful friend, There'll be no time to pre-
 4. When on death's pil-low I shall lie, Re-lect-ing o'er the pa-
 But if we ask the Sav-iour's help, He'll richly bless and guide us hom-
 So when our journey here is done, We'll reach the land of pure de-light
 If you would sin-ter-e-per-nal joy, Get ready now--it while you may
 I want a bless-ed peace with-in, That I can say's safe home at last

CHORUS.

O what joy a-waits us all, If we to Christ are true;
 O what joy a-waits us all, Where we shall nev-er say a-dieu

Property of P. A. Henry, 1912.



**OAK GROVE UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH
SEVIER COUNTY TENNESSEE**